

## Presentation of the 2023 Paleontological Society Pojeta Award to Lisa D. White

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Lisa White has made enormous contributions to increasing diversity and inclusion in especially field-based paleontology, geology, and oceanography, from developing programs for high school students all the way to early career scientists. With a B.A. degree in geology from San Francisco State University (SFSU), she received her Ph.D. in Earth Sciences at the University of California Santa Cruz, with an emphasis in diatom micropaleontology, stratigraphy, and biosiliceous sedimentology. From there, she returned to SFSU to eventually become the Chair of the Department of Geosciences and Associate Dean of the Division of Graduate Studies. At SFSU, she helped design and implement numerous major outreach programs, including the long-running National Science Foundation (NSF) program SF-ROCKS that introduced local high school students to conducting and presenting geological research within the confines of the city of San Francisco, and the School of Rock program that connects K–12 teachers with early career geoscientists to give them opportunities to participate in scientific cruises with the International Ocean Drilling Program (IODP). Even before taking up her Assistant Professorship at SFSU, she coordinated the Minority Participation in the Earth Sciences program (MPES) at the U.S. Geological Survey in Menlo Park, drawing on her lived experience as one of the only female African-American paleontologists and geoscientists.

In 2012, she became the Director of Education and Outreach at the University of California Museum of Paleontology (UCMP) at University of California Berkeley. There Lisa supervises a dynamic group of education and outreach staff whose responsibilities include maintaining and expanding the popular Understanding Evolution, Understanding Science, and Understanding Global Change websites (<https://evolution.berkeley.edu/>; <https://undsci.berkeley.edu/understanding-science-101/>; <https://ugc.berkeley.edu/background-content/evolution/>, respectively), continuing the pioneering work of previous Pojeta Award winner Judy Scotchmoor. These sites receive some 20 million pageviews per year, serving as platforms to promote the broader impacts of paleontology, evolution, global change, and the nature and process of science.

Lisa also directs the Advancing Community College Education and Student Success (ACCESS) program initiated by a

UCMP graduate student, a collaboration between the UCMP and Bay Area community college instructors to build hands-on (and now online), specimen-based paleontology lessons for community college students. Under her leadership, ACCESS has steadily grown in its size and scope and now serves community colleges within and beyond California. Lisa has also developed innovative digital field trips in collaboration with the Paleontological Research Institution (Ithaca, New York). She is principal investigator (PI) of the Ambassadors for STEM Training to Enhance Participation program, which leverages the IODP School of Rock and STEMSEAS programs to introduce members of historically excluded and underrepresented groups to oceanographic and geoscience research experiences, and is co-PI of the NSF-funded FIELD project aimed at developing best practices for equitable and inclusive field research experiences.

Lisa also manages a bewildering number of programs and activities in the greater national educational and outreach communities beyond the UCMP. These activities include her past membership of the National Academy of Sciences' Ocean Studies Board, the Berkeley National History Museum Outreach Committee, the Advisory Board for Science@Cal, and the UC Berkeley Coalition for Education and Outreach. She is frequently invited to join committees, working groups, and advisory boards within the Geological Society of America, the American Geophysical Union, the National Academies, and NSF. As an indication of her national standing, she was recently highlighted as one of Ten Incredible Black Women in STEM by Black Enterprise and was a featured scientist in the PBS NOVA documentary series Making of North America. She also received the Society for the Study of Evolution's Stephen Jay Gould Prize for sustained and exemplary efforts in the public understanding of evolutionary science, and the National Association of Geoscience Teachers' Miner Award for exceptional contributions to the stimulation of interest in the Earth sciences.

Lisa has also emerged as a national leading voice in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts in the biological and geological sciences. She chairs the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee for the 62,000-member American Geophysical Union (AGU), has given multiple invited keynote addresses, participated in several NSF Advisory Boards, co-chaired the International Ocean Discovery Program (IODP) Broader Impacts and Outreach working group, and been a panelist for the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science

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(SACNAS). She has also played a core role more locally in the UCMP's DEI and Anti-Racism efforts.

Beyond this impressive array of activities and accomplishments, Lisa is personally inspiring and fun to interact with. Anybody who has spent time with her knows that her enthusiasm for paleontology and Earth sciences is truly infectious, and that she

is always eager to introduce students to fossils in the museum or in the field. Lisa White's tireless and innovative work to make paleontology more accessible to the public and to build a more diverse and inclusive paleontological community is an enormous service to the field and to the Society, and richly deserving of the Pojeta Award.